

JOHN N. McMAHON

7 May 1985

Dr. John M. Clarke  
The Brookings Institution  
Route 2, Box 314  
Bracey, Virginia 23919

John:

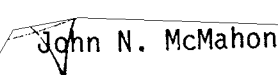
Many thanks for sending along your status report on the National Academy's study for "reducing uncertainty" between the United States and the Soviet Union. I also believe that the combination of traditional diplomatic means and highly sophisticated communications instruments have not led to a reliable and predictable regime for preventing and managing international crisis. I am not convinced that a crisis center would necessarily solve the internal bureaucratic and external diplomatic problems that complicate the task of crisis management, but it is extremely important to examine the organization and responsibility of such an interagency body.

I would only make the following suggestion. Over the past 25 years, it has become increasingly apparent that the task of crisis management between the superpowers has become complicated by regional conflicts that involve allies and clients of the United States and the Soviet Union. The superpowers have been responsible for arranging ceasefires in several Arab-Israeli wars, for example, but not before US deterrent measures were required to counter Soviet threats of intervention. As a result, I believe that any review of past crises should examine Soviet and US crisis management as well as the nature of superpower-client relations in regional crises. It would be extremely important, for example, to be able to identify if there were any missed opportunities in a regional crisis for Soviet-American consultations that would have avoided or limited the possibility of superpower confrontation.

One final thought: Although the superpowers signed general principles in 1972 that committed the US and the USSR to avoid dangerous crises, there was no attempt to clarify their respective interests in key regions, assess the potential for conflict, and calibrate a range of acceptable actions. Your study could identify such areas for bilateral discussion as weapons transfers to the Third World, advance notification of unilateral actions, and arrangements for restricting local conflict. Such a discussion could contribute to sensitizing the Soviets to the impact of their behavior in the Third World on the bilateral Soviet-American relationship as well as public opinion in the United States.

Good luck with the study.

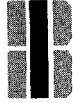
Sincerely,



John N. McMahon

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Route 2, BOX 314  
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April 14, 1985



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The Honorable John M. McMahon  
Deputy Director, Central Intelligence  
Agency  
Langley, Virginia 22102

Dear John:

The enclosed is sent by way of a status report on the proposal a select few of us drafted for the study. Note marginal marks. Suggestions? We can meet with you folks and welcome comment and/or factual correction.

Warm regards,



John M. Clarke

Enclosure:  
Nat'l Academy Abstract

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